

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EMIGRATION COMMISSIONER

OF THE

STATE OF WISCONSIN,

FOR THE YEAR 1853.

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MADISON :

BERIAH BROWN, PRINTER.

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1854.



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## REPORT.

*To His Excellency William A. Barstow,  
Governor of the State of Wisconsin:*

SIR:—At the close of a period of eight months, during which I have discharged the duties of the office of Emigrant Commissioner, conferred upon me by the State of Wisconsin, I deem it a pleasant task herewith to present to your favorable notice a concise report of what I have done, its result, and my observations hitherto.

I employed the few days left me after my appointment in the month of March last, before my departure for New York, in the preparation for the press of the description of the State, required in my instructions, and designed for circulation, and at once placed myself in communication with the publishers of many of the most widely read newspapers in Europe, by sending them my official cards.

Upon the recommendation of several members of the last legislature, I also appointed John A. Byrne, Esq., as my Assistant, a choice I have had no reason to regret, as I found him a man of efficiency and intelligence, and thoroughly fitted for the position for which he was selected.

On the first of May I received from my predecessor, G. Van Steenwyk, Esq., the furniture used in his office, and the remaining pamphlets; and as the office used by my predecessor had already been rented for other purposes, removed to rooms I had

in the meantime procured at 89 Greenwich street, near the landing places of the great majority of emigrant ships, immediately advertised my locality in several newspapers published in various languages, established communication with the various bureaus and societies of émigration, and called upon the Mayor of New York, and the resident consuls of the various European Governments, that I might in certain cases be assured of their co-operation; and finally took into my employ two active men in addition to Mr. Byrne, who were well acquainted with New York; and was thus at the very commencement in a situation completely to discharge the duties of my position.

As for many years past I had been accustomed regularly to visit New York, and neglected no opportunity to acquire information upon the condition of Emigration, it could not be difficult for me soon to become acquainted with the main influences that cause the newly arrived emigrant to direct his steps to this or that State.

One of the most prominent aids, I unquestionably found in the Press, which by means of books and newspaper reports upon single States, or the United States in general, of statistical information upon particular branches of industry—as agriculture, trade, mining, &c.—not only excites attention, but especially gives a determinate direction to the steps of the emigrant, as to the State in which to fix his residence.

This opinion thus formed, my now daily intercourse with emigrants fully confirmed. Although I omitted no opportunity that presented itself to labor for the good of our State in New York itself, I yet directed my chief aim to the press here and in Europe, and in a long series of articles, presented Wisconsin in general; its advantages above other States; descriptions of particular localities; its commerce; the wealth of its mineral, timber and agricultural districts; its climate, public institutions, political privileges, means of education, &c., before the eyes of all those, who for whatever cause, were determined to change their residence.

I also sent copies of the pamphlets, which in the meantime I

had received, to the editors of a large number of newspapers in the United States, Germany, Ireland, England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Holland and Switzerland, with the request to insert extracts therefrom in their respective journals.

The journals which I selected for advertisement and correspondence are, especially, the New York Tribune, Herald, Staats Zeitung, Irish American, Abend Zeitung, New York Democrat, Daily Wisconsin, Sentinel, Wisconsin Banner, Volksfreund, Nieuwsbode, Newarker Zeitung, Phoenix and Anzeiger des Nordwestens, and Republicaner in America, and the Times, Tablet and Tipperary Free Press, in England and Ireland, in the Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung, Schwabaeische Hercur, Casselsche Zeitung, Allgemeine Auswanderungs Zeitung in Rudolstadt, Nuernberger Correspondent, Ecipiger Zeitung, Bremer Auswanderungs Zeitung, in Germany, and Baseler Zeitung, in Switzerland.

In supplement A, I send you copies of these papers containing reports or advertisements from me. The results thus accomplished exhibited themselves in a surprising degree in a very short time, in written and personal inquiries from nearly every State in the Union and from many parts of Europe, and in the daily increasing number of inquiries at my office. From the first of May to the present time, a period of eight months, I received the really considerable number of 317 letters from Europe and America in reference alone to my official position, of which a large majority contained particular inquiries about Wisconsin, to which I made it my business to give faithful and detailed answers.

Over three thousand persons visited my office, during the same period, of whom nearly four hundred were from New York and vicinity, two or three hundred from other States and Wisconsin, and over two thousand came direct from Europe,—many of whom again, of course, often represented one or more families. Besides these, many emigrants were spoken with on the arrival of the ships in port.

The visitors were two-thirds Germans, a small number Ameri-

cans, and the remainder Irish, Norwegians, Swedes, English, Scotch, and Hollanders.

If it be true that the Irish emigration is near as extensive as the German, the reason why comparatively so few of them appeared at the office is, as Mr. Byrne, an Irishman by birth, and who had the most intercourse with them, can confirm, that the greater portion arrive with but limited means, and are therefore induced to seize upon the first work offered them for subsistence, which, indeed, is abundantly furnished by railroads and other important enterprises. Competition among employers is at present so great that, for example, the contractors upon the Illinois Central, and many other roads, have established agencies in New York, where not only are high wages offered to those seeking employment, but they are also transported, free of cost, or, at least, at much reduced rates of fare, to the place of their labor. The Irishman, also, is more inclined than the German to a residence in large cities.

I have received, mainly from Wisconsin, remittances of money, in sums of from \$5 to \$20, amounting to more than \$3,000, with the request to pay them to relatives, children, sisters, brothers, and parents, who were expected, but had not sufficient means to complete their journey.

There were also many minor children and aged persons referred to me, that on their arrival they might be protected against impositions, which humane requests I always willingly and cheerfully complied with.

Of the descriptions of the State placed at my disposal I have made the most liberal use, and have circulated them not only among the emigrants on the arrival of the ships, but have sent them off by mail, especially to Europe. In this, Dr. W. Hildebrandt, U. S. Consul at Bremen, and his Secretary, Mr. Whittlesey, (both from Wisconsin,) afforded me the most cheerful aid, for which I owe them my acknowledgments.

During the first two months, it was often difficult to gain a personal interview with those newly arrived, as they knew neither

my name nor office, and therefore appeared very distrustful; but from the month of July, a ship rarely entered the harbor with emigrants, [some of whom were not already in possession of my pamphlets, or had read some of my notices and communications: often, indeed, my address had been given them by emigrant societies or ship-owners, with the advice to follow my directions before all others. By living together during a long sea voyage, utter strangers often became strongly attached to each other, and thus it frequently happened that my station on the arrival of a ship was known to nearly all on board, when at the departure from the foreign port, usually but a few individuals had any knowledge of me, thereby often one-half met me with confidence, which was again the occasion that those who were yet undecided about their destination in America, generally chose Wisconsin as their new fatherland.

The number of pamphlets distributed and sent abroad is nearly 30,000, of which one-half found their way to Europe; I also seldom failed to give descriptions of Wisconsin, even to those who influenced by relatives and friends intended to settle in other States; and I have found this practical result, that more than one, discontented with the conditions of things which they there found, at once removed to Wisconsin, where some have since written to me, and expressed their acknowledgment for the counsel given them.

When I entered upon my duties, I supposed that my operations would be mainly confined to foreign arrivals; but many old inhabitants, and among them many American born citizens have applied to me for information and advice; and I thus found frequent opportunity to correct certain unfavorable impressions in regard to Wisconsin, originated either by inhabitants of neighboring rival States, or by individuals formerly resident in Wisconsin, who, chiefly through their own fault, were unsuccessful, and therefore left the State, and seek by misrepresentation of its character, to cover their own weakness. I lost no opportunity to refute these

infamous slanders, since a residence of eleven years in Wisconsin has abundantly convinced me of their falsity.

The unusual productiveness which has in the present year rewarded the labors of the farmer as well as the lumberman and miner, and the consequent general prosperity, afforded me an opportunity to circulate communications upon this subject in Europe, which will not fail of their effect, as already in consequence of those statements, minute inquiries respecting our lead mines have been addressed to me.

It is well known that the bonds of the various railroads now in course of construction in the West, though negotiated in New York, are purchased for European capitalists, and this is an additional reason why every honorable means should be employed to increase the emigration to Wisconsin, and to spread as widely as possible information respecting its favorable commercial position, and its other varied resources, that its already established fair fame may be raised still higher thereby; and thus railroad companies, and other important enterprises for the promotion of inland commerce, in Wisconsin, may find an easier and more favorable market for the negotiation and sale of their securities.

As a curiosity, I take the liberty to direct your attention to some newspaper articles attached hereto in supplement A, which I have taken from different journals published in our neighboring States.

If in these articles it is attempted to place my official character in a false light, and I am even personally assailed, the motive evidently is that spirit of jealousy, which is so naturally excited when one sees whole trains filled with emigrants passing directly through those States, which also yet contain millions of acres of untenanted land, in order to reach Wisconsin.

Though there may exist in the State and city of New York sufficient laws intended for the protection of the emigrants, I am compelled frankly to state, that they are rarely if ever enforced,

and frauds of the basest character are, in immense number, of daily occurrence.

In supplement A, you will find a copy of a report addressed in July last to Governor Farwell, together with communications published by me in reference to the impositions practised upon emigrants, to which I ask your attention.

Every means in our power was employed by myself and my assistants, to protect all those who came in contact with us against deception and fraud; but completely to prevent the disgraceful wrong, is beyond the power of individuals.

After the most careful inquiries respecting the Emigration from Europe to Wisconsin during the year just past, I am able to give only the following approximate numbers:

From Germany, including the adjoining countries where the prevailing language is German	16 to 18,000
Ireland . . . . .	4 — 5,000
Norway (mostly by way of Ruebeck,) perhaps	3 — 4,000
Holland, England, Scotland, Sweden and other European countries . . . . .	2 — 3,000

It is impossible for me to give any statement of the number of emigrants from the middle and Eastern States to Wisconsin, as I have no means of accurate information, though I am assured by intelligent men that it has also been much larger than in later years. According to statements made to me on the occasion of a trip through many portions of the State, the emigration has this year exceeded in number that of the three years immediately preceding, which can only be regarded as an encouraging indication of the further prosperity of Wisconsin, especially as from the tables of the Commissioner of Emigration in New York, the entire European immigration of this year by the way of New York, appears to be not any larger than that of the year 1852.

My efforts to bring the State of Wisconsin, with its healthful climate, and its rich and boundless resources and advantages, to the notice of the inhabitants of Europe, by means of the press,

and the result of those efforts cannot exhibit themselves at once, as every one knows who is partially acquainted with such affairs, but their effects will more evidently appear in the coming season of 1854, for such are the circumstances in Europe, that it often requires a year or more of preparation before the emigrant can leave his old home. Not only was I inclined to activity by the duties directly imposed upon me, but by the certain consciousness that if I should succeed in directing the long trains of emigrants to Wisconsin, I could confer no greater kindness, and could in no way better promote the further prosperity of these weary wanderers from Europe.

Every unprejudiced citizen and observer of our State must confess and acknowledge that the continued prosperity of its inhabitants, is in a great degree dependent upon further accessions to its population from abroad. If they are large, the prosperity and power of Wisconsin will increase in an equal degree; if not large, they will suffer many reverses. Whether he comes from other States of the Union, or from Europe, each individual contributes some thing to the general wealth and expansion, whether in physical strength, knowledge or capital. It may be asserted that a large number of enterprises of greater or less importance, have been undertaken upon the assumption of the most rapid possible increase of our population; and should such increase be cut off, or in a great degree lessened, many disastrous failures would be the certain result. Wisconsin, with the other western States, ought therefore earnestly to oppose all those measures which have been adopted either by the general government, or from selfishness by certain eastern States, for the sake of temporary profit, to undermine the established reputation and good name of the United States.

For years past, emigrants, especially those landing in New York, have been systematically plundered, for which shameless wrong not only the hireling sub-agent, runners, &c., are responsible, but especially those who retain these unprincipled subjects in their employ.

The eager desire for money, induces the various forwarding

lines leading to the West, or their agents, to resort to the most shameless means; and the profit that is made thereby, of which frequently the larger portion goes to the agents and the hirelings of those lines, is the chief cause that many laws designed expressly to check this crying injustice, are not only not executed, but are daily, and even hourly, most grossly violated with impunity, in the very presence and under the eyes of the public authorities. If, indeed, one of the victims attempts to bring the swindler to punishment, the venal tool is pushed forward, and every possible assistance afforded him, so that the unfortunate friendless foreigner, a stranger to the customs and laws, and often speaking a strange language, seldom succeeds in finding justice, and he suffers, in addition to his severe loss, the bitter experience of being compelled to find much in his new father-land quite different from the expectations he had indulged in. With bitter curses and complaints such incidents are reported to the home he left, and are by no means the least important reason that of late thousands of emigrants have emigrated to other countries.

The city of New York has also seen fit to increase the tax upon immigration, called commutation money, from \$1 50 to \$2 per capita, although the former rates produced more than enough, if judiciously expended, to support all the sick, and aged infirm, that became a burden upon the city or State in consequence of immigration. The sum produced by this tax in the year 1852 was near one-half a million of dollars, and will amount this year under the increased tax to \$700,000; which, of course, the immigrant being forced to contribute, reduces his capital by so much, and therefore is lost to the place of his future residence.

The right to levy this commutation money is doubted by many lawyers, as it can only be the merest assumption, in addition to the enormous profits which the city and State of New York necessarily derive from immigration, to demand from the mass double and even threefold compensation for the so disproportionate expenses caused by individuals.

The capital which, besides intelligence and physical strength,

is brought hither by European emigrants, is much larger than is usually supposed. To give an example only, I state that 120 persons, including women and children, who landed from a single ship from Germany, in August last, and were nearly all induced by me to locate in Wisconsin, had in their posession nearly sixty thousand dollars. It is a well-known fact that in the new states the value of imports greatly exceeds that of exports, often, indeed by one half, and yet the condition of those States improves, and their wealth increases year by year. Who supplies the deficit but the immigrant? Perhaps one quarter of the present inhabitants of Wisconsin from the middle and eastern States of the Union, would to this day never have seen the shores of Lake Michigan if they had not found purchasers for their property in the immigrants from Europe, who by their settlement in the eastern and middle States still contribute to the prosperity of the West.

Of late, nearly all European Governments have attempted to check the constantly increasing drain of population and capital from their dominions; and though they fail entirely to stop the stream, yet the measures they have adopted are not without effect. It is also too well known that on many sides the growing power of the United States is regarded with dissatisfaction, and begins to excite their serious apprehensions. But it is also known that every adopted citizen strengthens this power—and, therefore, recently these Governments have employed every means in their power to divert the stream, the flow of which they cannot stay, in another direction, to such countries whose governments sympathize with their own.

Among others, Brazil, which has many millions of acres of yet unoccupied lands lying within its boundaries, has just discovered the importance and profit of immigration, and has not only passed a law granting to every immigrant the necessary land for a home without price, but the Government has appropriated \$400,000 yearly to the furtherance of immigration; and besides, the difference between the cost of passage to the United States and to Brazil, is made up to every European arrival, while the passage

of children under eight years of age is paid entirely by the government; and those ships engaged in the transportation of emigrants, are entirely exempted from harbor duties. In consequence of these favorable conditions, two populous settlements have already been founded by Germans, and these will, according to recent reports, receive large accessions the coming year. This affords sufficient evidence of the importance attached to European immigration, and which it well deserves. How striking is therefore the contrast between the measures adopted in regard to immigration in New York and Brazil!

It could, indeed, be regarded only as an act of wisdom, should the present legislature of Wisconsin, in unison with the other western States, to take earnest steps for the removal of the hindrances which certain eastern States, with the avowed purpose of gain, have placed in the way of immigration, and to meet the emigrants with other liberal propositions on the part of Wisconsin.

The present law providing for the election of a Commissioner of Emigration is, in my opinion, so far defective as it requires the re-election of that officer every year, as this is a fatal obstacle to his greatest usefulness to the State.

I am convinced that this office can only be administered by a citizen of the State, who has long resided there, and has become intimately acquainted with its history and condition, and by means of frequent journeys has acquired local information, and in general possesses the confidence of his fellow-citizens.

That such men, who are also, perhaps, bound to the State by business or family ties, can only be induced under peculiar circumstances to accept such a position for so short a time, and so inadequate compensation, needs no further proof. Besides it requires a long time to become thoroughly acquainted with New York, and the conditions and circumstances of emigration in general, and to gather the necessary experience. Before this can be done the most favorable portions of the year is often past.

Every newly adopted measure, although designed for the benefit of emigrants, can only attain confidence and unity through

constant, and undeviating perseverance; and this must be incomparably more difficult when such a position is each year filled by a new incumbent.

It is not enough to look after the emigrant after his arrival in New York, but the official character, and also the name of the officer, should be universally and favorably known in Europe to the emigrant before his departure, to inspire him with confidence at once. The appointee should also be acquainted with the state of affairs in Europe, should have connections there in order to establish communications, and should understand the principal languages of the continent. And it is further important that the location of the commissioner should be permanent and fixed, which is now impossible, as each incumbent is forced to procure such rooms as can be obtained after his arrival in New York.

If it be statistically proven that the population of Ireland during the last ten years has suffered serious diminution in consequence of emigration, this has and can have no application to Germany. While the population of Ireland never exceeded ten millions, on the other hand, the German language is still at this moment by more than fifty millions spoken upon the Continent; and it is further settled, that an annual emigration of half a million, if uniformly distributed, would occasion no perceptible decrease. If it be considered that in the United States, and therefore proportionately in Wisconsin, magnificent enterprises are daily begun, with which lesser undertakings are connected, which can only realize their anticipated profits through the most rapid possible growth and prosperity of the State, to which immigration must contribute the highest aid. It must be a most narrow-minded policy to neglect not only to favor and encourage immigration, but also to use every exertion to direct it more and more to our own State.

In my daily intercourse with the emigrant, I directed the attention of those who intended to purchase land, to the school lands of our State, showing to those of limited means, that they could at once plant themselves in an entirely independent situation, as

it could not be difficult for them, with industry and patience, and the long term allowed for payment, to meet their obligation. Upon inquiry, I have had the satisfaction to learn, that during the past year large quantities of these lands, largely exceeding the sales of the previous year, have been sold, and chiefly to actual settlers. The interest and taxes paid upon the lands thus sold, will not only swell the resources of our free school system, but also will aid in the support of the burdens of the State.

It is also gratifying to direct your attention to the fact, that though the entire immigration to the United States during the year 1853, has little, if at all, exceeded that of the year preceding—Wisconsin has received, at least, 15 per cent. more than in 1852.

I have not the least doubt, that it can be yet greatly increased, if in connection with the glorious year of prosperity just past, which affords the best evidence of the fertility of the soil of Wisconsin, the State will, by the enactment of liberal laws suited to the times, and conservative of the personal freedom of each of its citizens, draw upon itself more and more the eyes of the world of progress.

In supplement B, I present you a statement of my expenditures during the period of my office to this date.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours, &c.,

HERMAN HAERTEL.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN,  
Dec. 30, 1853.





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